

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated December 4, 2001, claim 5 is amended.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the telephone interview courteously afforded to them. Claims 5-8 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(a) as anticipated by Sato.

Sato discloses a process wherein fixed and free abrasive grains are used in a two-step grinding process, with the second step using smaller-sized abrasive grains. Sato does not teach, disclose, or suggest the use of a two-step grinding process wherein the first step is carried out by only fixed abrasive grains and the second step by a combination of both fixed and free abrasive grains. Rather, Sato discloses a wafer grinding method, which employs both fixed abrasive grains 13, fixed to a polishing pad 12, and free abrasive grains 15 intervening between the polishing pad 12 and a work 10. Furthermore, Sato discloses a two step process of repeating such wafer grinding methods by changing the size of the abrasive grains.

This present invention, on the other hand, discloses a method using a grinding (via, for example, a stone). Unlike Sato, which uses ^{free} abrasive grains in the first and second step, the present invention uses fixed abrasive grains during grinding without free abrasive grains (as required in amended claim 5), and a combination of fixed abrasive and free abrasive grains in the subsequent grinding. The amendment to claim 5 satisfies the Examiner's concerns noted in paragraph 5 of the Office Action. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 5-8 is respectfully traversed.

All claims are now in condition for allowance and a notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

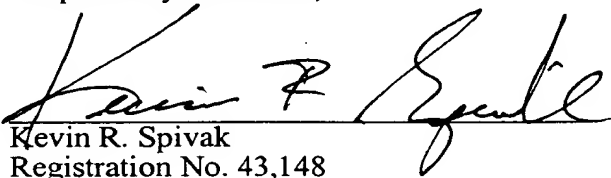
Attached hereto is a marked up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 47408200700 However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 1, 2002

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend the claims as follow:

5. (Amended) A method for grinding semiconductor wafers comprising:
grinding a surface of a semiconductor wafer with fixed abrasive grains and
without free abrasive grains;
supplying free abrasive grains to said fixed abrasive grains; and
subsequently grinding said surface of a semiconductor wafer with said fixed
abrasive grains and said free abrasive grains.